

No. 1 Winter 1964 Lbt. 996 Bruce F. Towne, Jamaica, Iowa 50128

*Howdy! This is our first effort of printing for Lone Scout groups. We hope to share with you all of the fellowship and memories of the better things in life. Short literary contributions and correspondence will be welcomed. Iowa area members doubly welcome.*

*Thanks, Bruce F. Towne*



## JAMAICA - Iowa, that is!

Jamaica has a population of around 250 people, 34 mongrel dogs, and 17 cats of unknown lineage. The town was established in 1882 by the Milwaukee R. R. Co. in order to provide an outlet for the produce of the fertile acres of Richland Township. Corn and soybeans comprise the main crops and the feeding of cattle and hogs is big business here.

The early settlers were of varied European ancestry. Our people are democratic, fond of ribald horseplay, and among the most generous people on earth.





S. O. S.

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#### HONEY GETTIN'

Thim Possum Mount'in fellers uster git honey from a hollow tree,  
It was put there, bit by bit, by the busy little bee.

They'uns wud watch thim bees, whin they wuz homeward bound,  
That made it kinda easy, fer that 'bee tree' to be found.

They'uns wud smoke out thim bees, and then saw down the tree,  
And then git all that honey, jist as sweet as sweet kin be.

'Twas a lot better tastin' than that there store bought kind,  
Least ways, it seemed to be in all thim fellers mind.

Reckin things be like that as we'uns go along life's way,  
The spice of adventure is a fine sauce as we live from day to day.

There be a trick to that therè game, of all that honey stealin',  
To take that honey from thim bees without thim stingers feelin'.

—Ezra L. Austin, *The Pine Hill Philosopher*

# The Old First Willow



The pasture and timber region north of town holds many ties with our boyhood days in Jamaica. Crumbling foundations of the old slaughterhouses are still in evidence as are the sodded remnants of an ice dam. Here and there the ruts of an early day road still remain.

It was here at the First Willow that the waters of Little Creek carved out a small pool where young Jamaicans whiled away many happy hours. The water abounded with sunfish, chubs and bullheads. All were easily tempted by a garden worm impaled on a small hook. A piece of store cord weighted by a nut sinker and dangled from a scrub willow stick completed the equipment.



When fishin' grew dull, here was a safe place to doff the faded overalls and the floursack B.V.D.'s and indulge in a little mud crawlin'. There would be the wild cry of "Hoss-fly" and screams of mock terror. Last one in was a "dirty so and so" and the last one out usually found his clothes tied in knots.

Then to a feast of green onion sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs and occasionally this would be augmented by a brace or two of frog legs fried over an open fire in mom's second best skillet. Dame Nature had made the old willow grow in a horizontal position before ascending skyward and this made a natural picnic table.

The first warm Sunday of spring found the hills filled with lads and dads flying home made kites. Nothing quite equalled the strips torn from Mom's old petticoat to provide a tail. An occasional "store bought" box kite would show up and the proud owner would just about get it flying and the cord would break.

Some found pleasure in using the rushing waters of the creek to turn an orange crate paddle-wheel or float a shingle boat. Others snared or drowned out ground squirrels.

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Many lads earned their first nickels driving the village milk cows to and from the pasture. Woe unto the youngster when old 'Bossy' developed the mating urge. My brother was 'called on the carpet' once because he struck for higher pay. He had been getting 25c. a month and wanted a raise and our neighbor complained to father.

Vacation days saw many sham battles between the 'cowboys' and the 'indians'. Wooden pistols, tomahawks, shingle darts, and an occasional cap pistol were all used in these terrifying battles which were for the most part more raucous than dangerous.

Winter time found more pleasure there. The gentle slopes were ideal for coasting and party groups from the local churches were frequent evening visitors. A challenge to young skaters was to skate from here to 'Coon River via Greenbrier Creek. It took nearly all day to accomplish this hardy feat.



A decade ago it seemed to be nature's plan to hold the clean waters of Little Creek for the pleasure of youth. Now, all is changed. The old First Willow is still there but the graceful beauty is gone and only the gnarled and straggly skeleton remains. It looks much like a rheumatic old man who has lived beyond his time.



Where happy lads once waded there now sprawls a gaunt skeleton of ancient Chevy. A headlight now peers crazily as if it were a one eyed monster from a fairy tale. The Little Creek trickles discouragingly and the bends that once gave depth and beauty to the stream now appears as the convulsions of a tormented gut trying to expel the stinking vomit that corrupts this once hallowed spot. Such is the price of progress.

